

NEW LIGHT AT RACINE REEF, WISCONSIN.

L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

RECOMMENDING

A NEW LIGHT AT RACINE REEF, WISCONSIN.

JANUARY 13, 1902.—Referred to the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, January 10, 1902.

SIR: This Department has the honor to state, at the instance of the Light-House Board, that the gas-lighted beacon now on Racine Reef, Wisconsin, after careful use and frequent improvement, fails to properly mark that danger to navigation.

The Racine Reef is a dangerous stretch of solid rock extending in a northeasterly and southwesterly direction about 5,000 feet, the shallowest spot of which is approximately in its center, and is distant $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the main light at Racine. It lies in the track of vessels running between Milwaukee and Chicago. As the route is kept open all the winter, it is necessary that a light should be maintained there without interruption.

The Light-House Board has tried to light this reef economically by establishing on it tentatively a gas beacon. This lighted beacon did not prove to be as efficient as was expected, as it was frequently extinguished by the heavy winter waves, when in each case the beacon became unserviceable until it was repaired. The light-house tender *Dahlia*, which draws about ten feet of water, can not approach nearer than 900 feet to the beacon, and this only in calm weather. The charging of the beacon tanks with compressed gas from this distance is difficult and it is also injurious to the tender's pumping machinery. It becomes impossible during stormy weather to reach the beacon, even in a small boat. The Board at such times has been compelled to temporarily discontinue the light.

The Light-House Board at its session on October 7, 1901, considered the matter of providing a light and fog signal to properly mark this

reef. It then concluded that the gas-lighted beacon now in use at Racine Reef ought to be discontinued and that a light tower some 60 feet high was needed in its stead, with a fog signal and keeper's quarters. The sight deemed best suited for the structures is to the eastward of the shallowest portion of the shoal in a depth of about 16 feet of water, at a point about northeast from the present beacon. The Board considers it imperative that such structures should be provided for this important station with the least delay practicable.

The Board estimates that a suitable light tower with a fog signal and quarters for the light keepers can be built at a cost not exceeding \$75,000, and it recommends that an appropriation of this amount be made therefor.

This Department concurs with the Board in that opinion and recommends that the needed appropriation of \$75,000 be made for the establishment of a light and fog-signal station at Racine Reef, Wisconsin.

Respectfully,

L. J. GAGE, *Secretary*.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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